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Governor Doyle Streamlines Power Transmission and Generation Siting Processes

Calls for Energy Conservation and Renewables

Governor Jim Doyle presented today a plan to streamline the Department of Natural Resources and Public Service Commission processes for siting electric transmission lines and power generation facilities and a plan to restore Wisconsin as a national leader on energy conservation and renewable energy sources.

The Governor thanked the agencies for delivering on a commitment made three weeks ago when he issued an Executive Order calling for reforms to the siting process while preserving environmental protections.

"Just three short weeks ago, we all stood here after the biggest blackout in the nation's history had occurred on the East Coast," Governor Doyle said. "We made a commitment to reform our regulatory process to ensure a reliable, modern transmission and generation system that Wisconsin's businesses and families can rely on, and today we are delivering on that promise."

PSC Chairperson Burnie Bridge and DNR Secretary Scott Hassett signed a cooperative agreement to cut the regulatory review process for transmission lines and other lateral energy projects in half. By coordinating their reviews and creating a new energy permitting unit at DNR, the state will provide applicants more certainty on the timing of their requests and consistency in decision making. The agreement will require some minor statutory changes as well.

The Governor noted that Wisconsin has the second most constrained transmission system in the nation.

"At a time of unprecedented need to build additional power generation and transmission in Wisconsin, I believe we must also restore Wisconsin's leadership in energy conservation and renewable energy sources like sun, wind, and biomass," Governor Doyle said.

The Governor also announced today the formation of a special Energy Conservation and Renewables Task Force composed of leaders from the energy sector with experience and expertise in these areas. Seasoned energy attorney Lee Cullen, with Cullen, Weston, Pines and Bach, will chair the group.

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The Governor directed the Task Force to work on solutions that make sound business sense, that will help reduce our dependence on out-of-state energy, and that will help Wisconsin ratepayers save money.

"By using electric energy more efficiently and generating more electricity from renewable sources, we can reduce the need to build power plants and transmission lines, while reducing emissions and limiting impacts to our air water and land. Energy conservation is good for our environment and good for our economy," Doyle said.

According to the Governor, the announcements today to reform the power transmission and generation siting regulatory process and to work on energy conservation and expanded use of renewable energy sources will move Wisconsin closer to our goals, "to ensure we can deliver the electricity our state needs to promote economic growth and create high skill high wage jobs in Wisconsin."